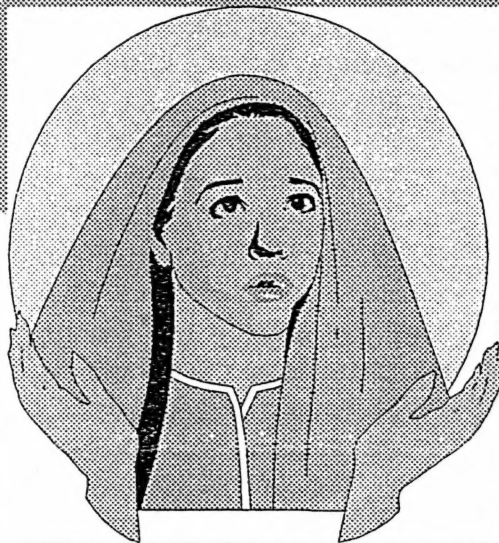


VOICE IN THE WILDERNESS

Behold, the Virgin shall conceive and bear a Son,
and they shall name Him Emmanuel,
which means, "God is with us,"
[Matt 1:23]

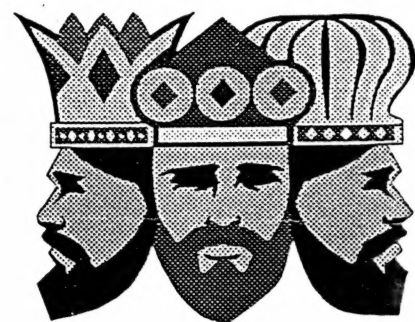


Someone once said that humanity was not created for destruction. Indeed, it was God's will that all human beings live forever, in love, joy, peace, and Communion with their Creator. Sin, of course, resulted in this decaying world of evil, sickness and death.

However, Adam and Eve's rebellion did not take God by surprise. Knowing the end from the beginning, He took everything into account when He formulated His Divine Plan for the Salvation and redemption of all Creation.

Before the fall, before the creation, even before Time itself - God the Son, the second person of the Holy Trinity, was destined one day to be born a man and to die on the Cross to save us from our sins. This is why the Orthodox Church views the birth of Christ (Christmas) in connection with His death and resurrection (Pascha).

So this Christmas, as we celebrate the birth of the Christ - Child, let us remember that the story doesn't end with the adoration of the Magi and Shepherds, rather, remember that the child that you see in the manger has come to take your place on the Cross. He was born to die, so that you may at last be free to live!



THE MABO DECISION & ORTHODOX CHRISTIANITY

The history of Aboriginal Australia is very little known in our country. At school most of us were bombarded with the history of White Australia. We were taught about James Cook, the First Fleet and of course the courage of those first English settlers and explorers. All this is valid and a history worthy of pride. The duality of severity and beauty that characterises our Nation is almost beyond compare with the rest of the world. The early settlers conquered the severity of the land and generations later we live in the blessedness of this country.



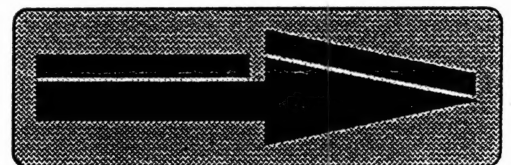
JESUS SAID... "LOVE ONE
ANOTHER AS I HAVE
LOVED YOU!" [John 13:34]

What we fail to recognise is the *pre-white people history* of Australia.

Before white people came here this land *was* inhabited. The Aboriginal people have a history far longer than many other nations. Some estimates say that Aborigines have inhabited Australia for some *60 000 years*. Even great civilisations like Greece and China can only boast a history of perhaps 6000 years.

The Aboriginal people appreciated and respected the beauty and severity of this land. Indeed their spirituality and religion was deeply rooted in the land, so much so, that they managed to sustain a great harmony with the environment. The Aboriginal Soul and the land was perceived in unison, one lost without the other. Ownership and abuse of the land was a foreign concept. White occupation, or as the Aboriginal Community would put it, invasion, brought this harmony to a ferocious conclusion. Displacement, cultural oppression, the introduction of alcohol, disease and racism has brought the Aboriginal community to its knees. They are the poorest, most disadvantaged people in our society. Alcoholism, violence and crime is rife, often re-enforcing white prejudice and apprehension. The problems are great and answers don't come easy, in fact no one really has any practical solution.

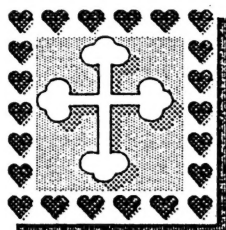
{Continued over}



The Mabo Decision & Orthodox Christianity continued from last page

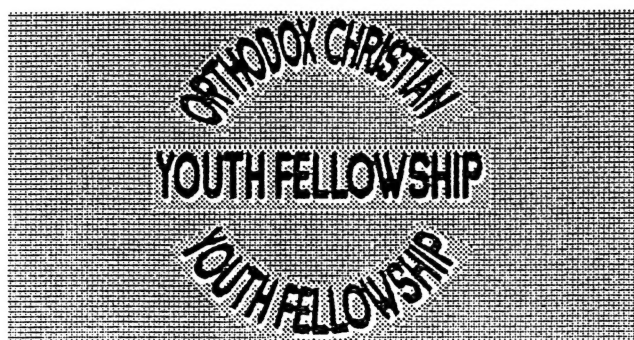
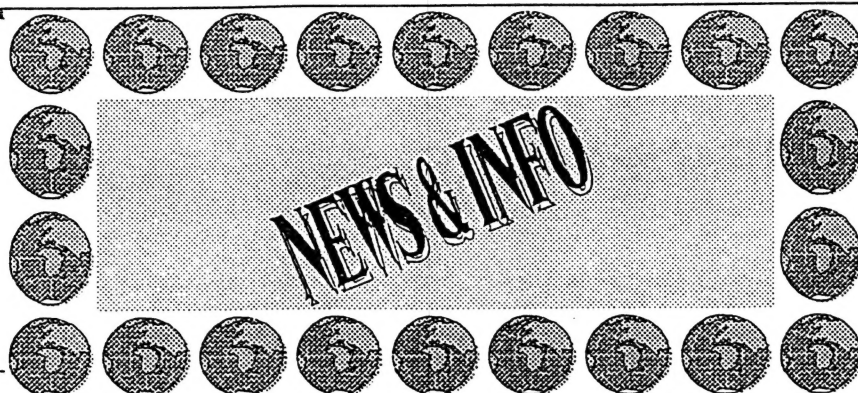
The indigenous people of Australia have been displaced socially, geographically, culturally and spiritually. Losing the land meant almost losing themselves. Many have lost a sense of who they are or what it means to be Aboriginal. The culture for many is now alcohol, violence, poverty, crime and social disadvantage.

Hope is not lost and the spirit of this great people is not broken. Much struggle and hidden dignity has held their cause just and upright. Recent events and an increasing awareness within our society is beginning to slowly change things. In a historic decision of the High Court of Australia the Aboriginal people were given recognition as the legal inhabitants of this land before white settlement. No one had done this before. This is the *Mabo Decision*. The court said that this country was occupied when white settlers arrived and that the Aborigines were the occupants. Where Aborigines can prove an ongoing connection with the land since white settlement, they have a claim and right to it. This does not mean the entire continent or our backyards are up for grabs. National interests and the rights of other citizens are to be protected.



At stake is the notion of recognition. This is an opportunity for many Aborigines to rediscover their identity which is so heavily connected with the land. There is much we can all learn from this relationship between humanity and the environment. This relationship, within traditional Aboriginal culture is based on respect and harmony between people and God's creation.

Orthodox Christianity with its respect for people's God given identity has much to offer our Black sisters and brothers. In turn we also have much to learn from them. Orthodox Christianity with its emphasis on the *transfiguration of humanity and creation* can be juxtaposed on the harmony with the land dynamic of Aboriginal culture. The Orthodox, as a minority faith in this country, often with great attachment to the land of their own country of origin are the ones that should most understand the Aboriginal - Land connection. Of all Christian Churches, the Orthodox Church is most able to heed the cry of suffering from Aboriginal Australia and offer its hand in Love and insight. Its experience and theology has amazing parallels. Jesus teaches us that we must stand with the oppressed, defend the weak, help the poor and understand the suffering. We can start helping Aborigines by simply changing our own attitudes !



The Orthodox Christian Youth Fellowship (O.C.Y.F.) was established 5 months ago under the spiritual guidance of Father Gregory and Deacon Dimitri. A sub-committee was formed, which consists of a Co-ordinator and 4 Youth Leaders. Our numbers are gradually increasing and the age range varies from 13 to 20 years.

Topics are mainly based on the needs and interests of the members. Issues that have been addressed to date consist of:

- What is Orthodoxy ?
- Church and the Liturgy.
- Astrology and the occult.
- War and Violence.
- How do we know God exists ?
- Women and the Church.

The group also has social outings and games, drama, etc...on the premises.

WHERE - *RESPIRE CENTRE (next to St. George)*
WHEN - *EVERY SECOND FRIDAY (next fellowship is 10 December)*
TIME - *7.30 to 9.45 pm.*

Come along and bring a Friend. If you have transport difficulties we may be able to help. For further Info phone Ms Helen Demitriou on 207 5603(Hme) or 841 4444(Bus. Hrs).



Every Tuesday night, from 7.30 to 9.30pm, our **PARISH LIBRARY & RESOURCE CENTRE** is open to all parishioners. The Library is located upstairs in the Welfare Building next to St. George's Church. In the library are many books on the Orthodox Faith which you are able to Borrow for a lending period of 2 weeks. There is no cost for this service although there are small overdue books charges. The centre also allows you to borrow videos of talks and cassettes with talks on our Faith and Church. You are also very welcome to just drop in for a coffee and a chat. **SEE YOU THERE NEXT TUESDAY NIGHT !**



OUR MAILING LIST

We are trying to update our mailing list. If you know someone not on the list or you've changed your address, please let us know. Add someone to the list or change details by writing them in the Mailing List Book located at the Church Candle Desk at Saturday Night Liturgy. Alternatively you can send info to Ms P. Ganis, 1 Kidwelly St, Carindale, 4152.

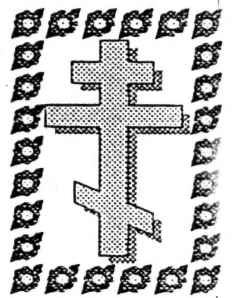
NEWS
& INFO
(cont.)

FOOD & TOY DRIVE

This Christmas, many families will not be able to have the Christmas wealthier families have. With increasing unemployment and financial problems Christmas can for some people be a time of hardship. You can Help by playing your part in the Church's Food & Toy Drive at the ENGLISH LITURGY on SATURDAY 18 DECEMBER

Simply bring a box of Food &/or Toys to the Liturgy on Saturday 18 December and we will give it to those in need this Christmas. There will be people near the candle desk during the service to whom you can give your donation. The Church will receive Food & Toys from 6.00pm until the end of the English Liturgy at about 7.30pm. **PLEASE HELP !**

NATIONAL YOUTH CONFERENCE

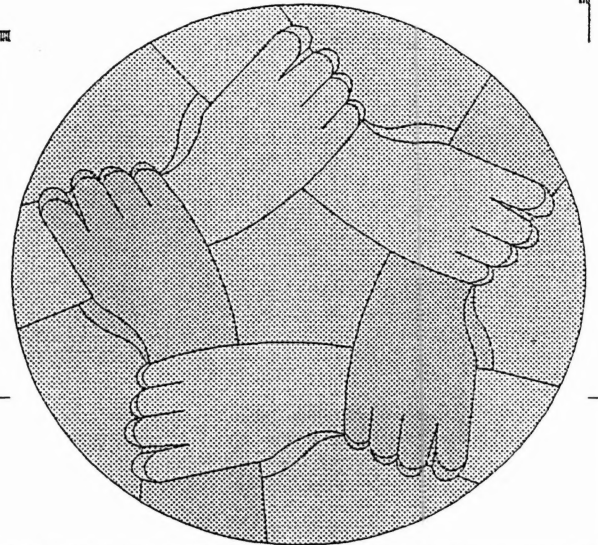


In January 1994 our Church here in Brisbane will host the *6th National Greek Orthodox Youth Conference*. The Conference takes place every 4 years at different places throughout Australia and involves the attendance of delegates from every parish throughout our nation. Although a Youth Conference, people from a wide age range normally attend and there is no age limit on registering for the Conference. We are expecting approximately 400 - 500 people will attend the Conference which runs from Saturday night 22 January to Wednesday night 26 January 1994.

The theme of the Conference is *The Social and Moral Values of the World and Christian Morality*. The speakers include our Archbishop and a Professor of Theology from the University of Athens. A Registration form is included with this newsletter.

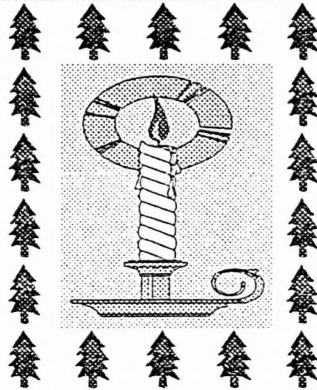
On Saturday 22 January 1994 there will be 4 of our Bishops attending the English Liturgy. Following the service there will be an English Liturgy BBQ.

MORE NEWS !



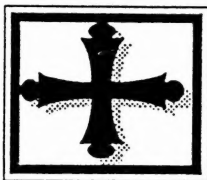
CHRISTMAS ENGLISH LITURGY

The English Liturgy will be held as usual throughout the Christmas and New Year period. This means there will be a Christmas Day English Liturgy at the normal time of 6.30pm at the Church of St. George. If you are able to stay after the service, try to bring some Christmas Dinner left overs so we can all have a Christmas night supper together after the Liturgy.



WE HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE !

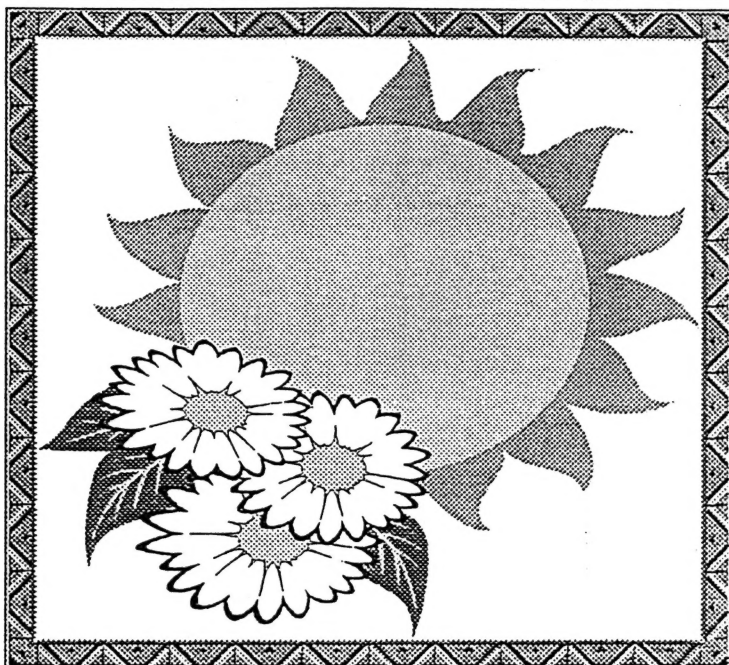
On New Years Day, the English Liturgy will begin as normal at 6.30 pm with supper afterwards.



FAREWELL NICHOLAS !

Most of you would have seen him and some of you would have heard of him. Our own long haired Aussie Altar Boy, Nicholas Brown is off next Year to study Theology at our Theological College, St. Andrew's. He'll sorely be missed from the Altar corp where his radical hair do and goatie proved an inspiration for Deacon Dimitri. Nicholas will be welcomed down south as yet another one of those boys from that amazing Priest producing factory in Brisbane. Nicholas, your brothers and sisters in the Lord pray for God to be with you to bless and guide your path. Just remember the community that produced you in your prayers.





The Holy Trinity is an unfathomable mystery which cannot be explained in human terms. We can only declare what has been revealed to us about the being and nature of God.

As Saint Epiphanius wrote in the 4th century *"[We] confess the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit to be consubstantial [of one essence], three hypostases [three persons], one essence, one Divinity. That is the true faith which has been handed down by the Fathers and is prophetic and evangelical and apostolic, which our fathers proclaimed, who were gathered together in the council of Nicea..."*

God is a Trinity of Persons. God is One. This is the first and great mystery of God. The first person of the Holy Trinity is the Father. The second person is the Son, and the third person is the Holy Spirit. All are of the same uncreated essence - unlike everything else which is created.

The Source of Divinity is the Father. The Son is forever born of the Father. The Holy Spirit forever proceeds from the Father. But since all three persons share the same essence, they are not three Gods, but one only. Therefore, the Son [Jesus] is and can be called God.

At a particular point in time, the Son took on a human nature through the virginal birth from Mary. This is why she is called Theotokos which means bearer of God [she was pregnant with Jesus who is God]. This event is called the Incarnation, which means the taking on of flesh [a body].

Jesus Christ is the Son of God [the second person of the Holy Trinity] who took on human nature through the Theotokos. His fully Divine nature and His fully human nature are united in a totally harmonised way [unconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably].

This mystery, which transcends the human ability to fully understand, is expressed in the following way: *Jesus Christ is one Person* [one "Hypostasis"], *who unites in Himself two natures* [Divine nature and Human nature]. *It was necessary for God to become Human so that He could be the Saviour of humanity.*



**DID
YOU
KNOW?**

Dr Clifford Wilson, a former Director of the Australian Institute of Archaeology, has stated that there is much archaeological evidence supporting the Bible. "For the unbiased research student the evidence is compelling..." says Dr. Wilson. "The evidence has led me increasingly to accept the literal nature of the Bible record as authentic History."

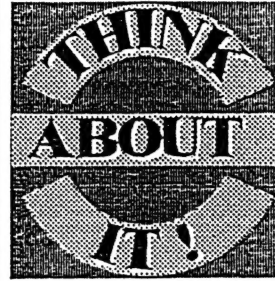
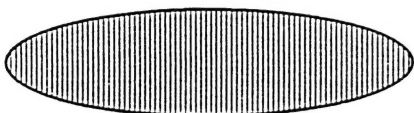
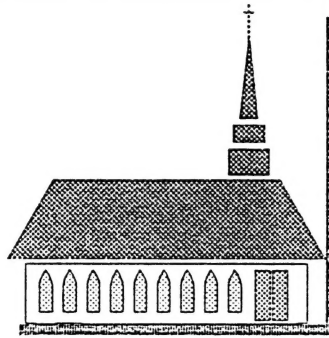
(New Life, April, 1993 p.4).



SOMEONE REFLECTS
ON THE
CHURCH OF GOD

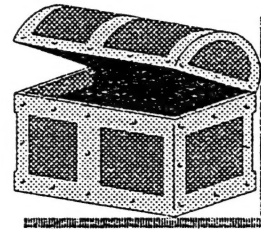
Sister of wisdom
I noticed that your
smile had faded,
Softened in transience
amongst places of New.
And I wondered
Whether life had left your
soul giving stance.
But on seeing the candle still flickering,
My heart filled with the Blood
Spilt to the floor,
Freely offered up by our Brothers and Sisters
Through past sacrifice;
And done so, to reinstate clarity
Of Truth, and maintenance of core Tradition.
Only then did I understand
That the road before you and I,
Though potted with holes and obstacles
Is so worthy of travel.
For through the harshness
I am given, to standing in common with Hope,
Still fresh in the Faith
That we will be victorious;
Being driven and drawn forward
By the knowing
That we are struggling
For that which is timeless.
While those against us
Are fixating on that which will pass.

{A Poem by Vas Theodorakis 14.11.93}



A poor farmer had an accident one day and broke his leg. That meant that he would be laid up for a long time, unable to work. His family was large and needed help. Someone organised a service at Church to pray for his family. While the people were asking God to help the family there was a loud knock on the door. Someone tiptoed to the door, opened it, and there stood a young boy who said, "My Dad couldn't come to the service tonight, so he sent his prayers in a truck." And there was a truck loaded with potatoes, meat, apples and other produce from his farm !

**PLEASE HELP WITH THE FOOD & TOY
DRIVE !**



Saint Isaac said Blessed is the person who knows their own weakness, because awareness of this becomes for him the foundation and beginning of all that is good and beautiful.

Saint Silouan of Athos said Where there is pride there cannot be Grace, and if we lose Grace we also lose both love of God and assurance in prayer. The soul is then tormented by evil thoughts and does not understand that she must first humble herself and love her enemies, for there is no other way to please God. The Lord gave us the commandment, "Love your enemies."

Saint Benjamin said as he was dying If you do the following you can be saved, "Be joyful at all times, pray without ceasing, and give thanks for all things."

